

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

This press release may be sent to news organizations in your area, including local newspapers and publications by clubs, schools, or religious organizations. Include your name and a telephone number where you can be reached. Send the release out a few weeks in advance, and put "May 1, 2006 after the words "For release: . . ." if you don't want it published until May.

For release: *(fill in desired date or type "for immediate release")*

For more information: *(Your name and telephone number)*

Last year in Virginia, **12,202** incidents of suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation of elderly persons and adults with disabilities were reported to and investigated by Adult Protective Services (APS). APS is the system that was established by the *Code of Virginia* and operated by the local departments of social services to investigate allegations of adult abuse and provide services to the victim to stop or alleviate the mistreatment.

The mistreatment may include physical abuse, sexual assault, neglect of essential health or personal needs, and the exploitation of the victim's financial resources and income. APS substantiated **61** percent of all reports in fiscal year 2005.

Though the abuse of vulnerable adults is not a new phenomenon, it has long been cloaked in silence and has not had the public visibility that abuse of children has had. Some research indicates that abuse of vulnerable adults is as prevalent as the abuse of children; however, adult abuse is vastly underreported.

Adults who are vulnerable to mistreatment are frequently isolated and less likely to have their plight discovered by an interested outsider. Many who are victimized go unreported and unaided. **Thirty** percent of substantiated reports concerned the self-neglect of adults living in their own homes. APS also investigated over **3,755** reports of abuse in facilities such as nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and facilities for the treatment of mental health illness or mental retardation.

May is Older Americans' Month. During this special month, the Department of Social Services, in collaboration with the Department for the Aging, AARP, Virginia Coalition for the Prevention of Adult Abuse, and SeniorNavigator seeks to bring the problem of victims of adult abuse to the attention of all Virginians. Victims of adult abuse are from all income levels, races, and ethnic backgrounds. A campaign to inform the public about adult abuse and what individuals can do to address this issue is being conducted by *(organization or LDSS's name address & telephone number)*.

Report suspected adult abuse to the local department of social services or to the state 24-hour, toll-free hotline at **1-888-83-ADULT (1-888-832-3858)**.